

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON PUBLIC HEALTH

Board Meeting Date: June 15, 2020

Location: Webex Meeting

Members in Attendance: Anthony L. Schlaff, MD, MPH, Chair
David Hemenway, PhD
Pat Maher, APRN, MA MS
Peter Moyer, MD MPH
Gretchen Stoddard, DrPH, MPH

Agenda Items	1. Approval of minutes 2. Update on COVID-19 3. Declaring racism public health crisis
Call to Order	5:05 pm
1. Welcome	
2. Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approval of minutes:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Motion to approve minutes from May 18 meeting○ David motioned to approve, seconded by Pat Maher○ All in favor to approve, motion carried unanimously• Update on COVID-19:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Global: 7.9 million cases, 433, 000 deaths○ US: 2.1 million cases, 117, 000 deaths○ MA: 105,000 cases, 7,600 deaths○ Spikes in warmer climate regions, i.e., Africa○ China back in the news with report of three new cases in a wet market. Forty-six more asymptomatic also tested and probably affected 10 fold (around 530 people).○ US slow in terms of deaths and new cases, but seven states reopening show more cases arising. Massachusetts cases are slowing.○ Massachusetts is only in the second phase of reopening. Issues in Brookline reopening outdoor restaurant seating - only 6 ft. distance between tables, lots of call from residents complaining people are too close.○ Since the last meeting increase of about one case per day. BROOKLINE: Total positive cases: 376, probable cases: 62, suspect individuals (since 4/6/20): 32, quarantined: 31, deaths: 49○ Town has over 400 cases, including probable and suspect cases

- If we continue to see decrease in cases, we could see zero cases in a day soon unless impacted by the July reopening.
- Since last Wednesday, June 10, Wingate deemed a COVID-free facility with no cases reported in 21 days. It is the first facility like this in town to reach this status. Since the overall community is still reporting cases, they cannot reduce amount of PPE.
- CareOne is still accepting patients from the hospital. The increase in deaths linked to this facility, up from 42 to 49 deaths.
- Brookline reached a peak between 4/15 -4/19, highest number of cases.
- Intern from Tufts to help create a report for on COVID-19 in Brookline. Dr. Jett had a conference call with her and they are coordinating her schedule.
- **Reopening Brookline.** Some of the complaints with reopening involve outdoor seating, public ways, bikes and expanding public ways.
 - Food establishments with outdoor seating permits can open, but others will have to apply. The process of applying for outdoor seating needs streamlining.
 - Outdoor seating requires 4 ft. barrier between patrons and people who are passing by, conflicting with public ways. People are looking into creative ways to protect people using Plexiglas.
 - In other communities moving to outdoor seating, Dr. Jett has observed people not wearing masks at any point which is concerning because of risk for disease transmission with no vaccine available.
 - Phase 3 could begin within another two weeks opening indoor seating and there is no testing site.
 - **Testing.** Dr. Jett was able to acquire 1000 swabs from the state health department for testing. He is working with Fallon and Chief Sullivan to provide testing in senior housing and BHA. They will work on the logistics. Dr. Jett has worked on procurement and reimbursement for entities.

- Staff returned at 25% capacity to department, could move to 50% in a couple of weeks. Dr. Jett is not comfortable with opening to public yet.
- Dr. Schlaff stressed the importance of contact tracing. With one or two cases per day, Health has capacity to contact trace should there be a spike in cases.
- Pat Maher brought up the challenge in contact tracing posed by people returning to work and eating in restaurants.
- Dr. Jett has approved all of the graduations.
- Department has received complaints about facilities and other school related issues and dealt with them during COVID. Inspectors have transitioned back to more response for environmental complaints. They are moving away from contact tracing leaving about 5-7 people as contact tracers, including Pat Maher, Dr. Moyer, Dr. Jett and some of the school nurses.
- Dr. Jett talked about reopening without a vaccine and the impact it could have on infection rate among the population. Beaches, bars, restaurants opening as vacation season begins.
- Dr. Schlaff talked about the careful reopening helping to control the possibility of spike in cases. Massachusetts is a phased reopen while some states have just quickly reopened even when the number of cases were not coming down.
- Dr. Jett stated we have to assume there will be significant risks in reopening. Reopening and protests will increase risk of spread.
- Dr. Schlaff brought up the two ways to herd immunity (natural infection and vaccine). Dr. Jett suggested we could end up with herd immunity at the current rate without a vaccine available by fall. They also discussed vaccine development, possibly a couple in third phase/clinical trials.
- Pat Maher asked what percent of the population testing would reach. Dr. Jett was unsure of the percentage. He plans to reach vulnerable population. The tests are going to be available to people whom are also asymptomatic and results reported by the Health Department to residents.

- **Declaring racism public health crisis**

- Dr. Jett discussed Mayor Walsh in Boston declaring racism as a public health emergency. He does not want

to declare an emergency. He would like to think about declaring a public health crisis and wanted to discuss what that means.

- Dr. Schlaff wanted to make sure that a statement by ACPH also includes supporting actions.
- Dr. Jett discussed the health disparities, health inequities and poverty in ACPH mission statement and strategic plan. He suggested working with Dr. Gellineau, Director of Diversity, Inclusion & Community Relations, and work with Diversity Commission. He wants to have additional public health forums and ways to measure success.
- Pat Maher asked about Police involvement, but Dr. Jett would like to focus on a public health agenda. He discussed looking at systematic and policy changes in Brookline.
- Dr. Schlaff mentioned it is beyond the police, but death or murder caused by law enforcement, mortality is a public health measure.
- Dr. Stoddard discussed Mayor Walsh's declaration giving him the authority to decide where money goes, part of funding coming from police budget. She suggested finding out if his plan involves their public health commission and if there is something Brookline and ACPH can do similarly.
- Other public health organizations are doing something similar. Dr. Jett will look into the ways these organizations are approaching this. He is curious about what it involves - shift of money or dedicated to meeting some objective.
- Dr. Schlaff shared a draft of a statement from the ACPH. He discussed the need for a town wide effort.
- Dr. Moyer added that each department will have to address the problem separately and the deeply rooted systemic racism in some departments, including his experience in Boston EMS. He discussed the need to address systemic racism in town police and fire departments, difficulties in dealing with deep sentiments. He mentioned people of color leaving the town after dealing with racism in these departments.
- The ACPH will issue a statement. Dr. Hemenway challenged Dr. Schlaff's wording "legally enforced segregation" because since civil rights it is technically illegal even if government processes support it.

- They discussed including actionable steps, a starting point - creating dialogue, commitment to programmatic changes.
- Dr. Jett has been working with Caitlin Starr to organize future forums on racism and public health.
- Dr. Stoddard suggested adding a statement, a call to action from others in the community.
- **DRAFT OF STATEMENT:** As public health professionals, we add our voice to others in Brookline condemning the violent act committed against George Floyd and grieve with his family, his community and our country. We are not condemning just an individual act, but one that must be understood in the context of our country's ongoing struggle with racism and violence directed at people and communities of color. As a society, we have not moved as far from the systematic terrorism of lynching and Jim Crow as many would have us think. Police violence against unarmed black men and women is all too common. It is not random or accidental, and it targets and terrorizes entire communities. It combines with segregation, mass incarceration, and systematic exclusion from educational and economic opportunity to maintain a system of control and oppression over people of color. These are underlying causes of the health disparities experienced by our communities of color. Pope Paul VI said, "If you want peace, work for justice." As a society, we have refused for too long to listen to calls for justice. That work is more urgent than ever.

We are committed to working together with others to foster justice through anti-racism action and inclusion, to ensure peace through the eradication of police violence and racial profiling, and to improve the health and flourishing of people of color in Brookline. We call on other members of the Brookline community and other departments in town government to join in this effort. We will be working to continue the dialogue and develop action plans over the next weeks and months to share with all. Please stay tuned.
- Dr. Schlaff will wordsmith and final statement shared on the ACPH website.
- This will become a standing agenda item in the coming weeks.

**3. Other
Business**

Meeting Adjourned 5:48 pm